



*Sutherland Shire
Historical Society Inc*
Bulletin



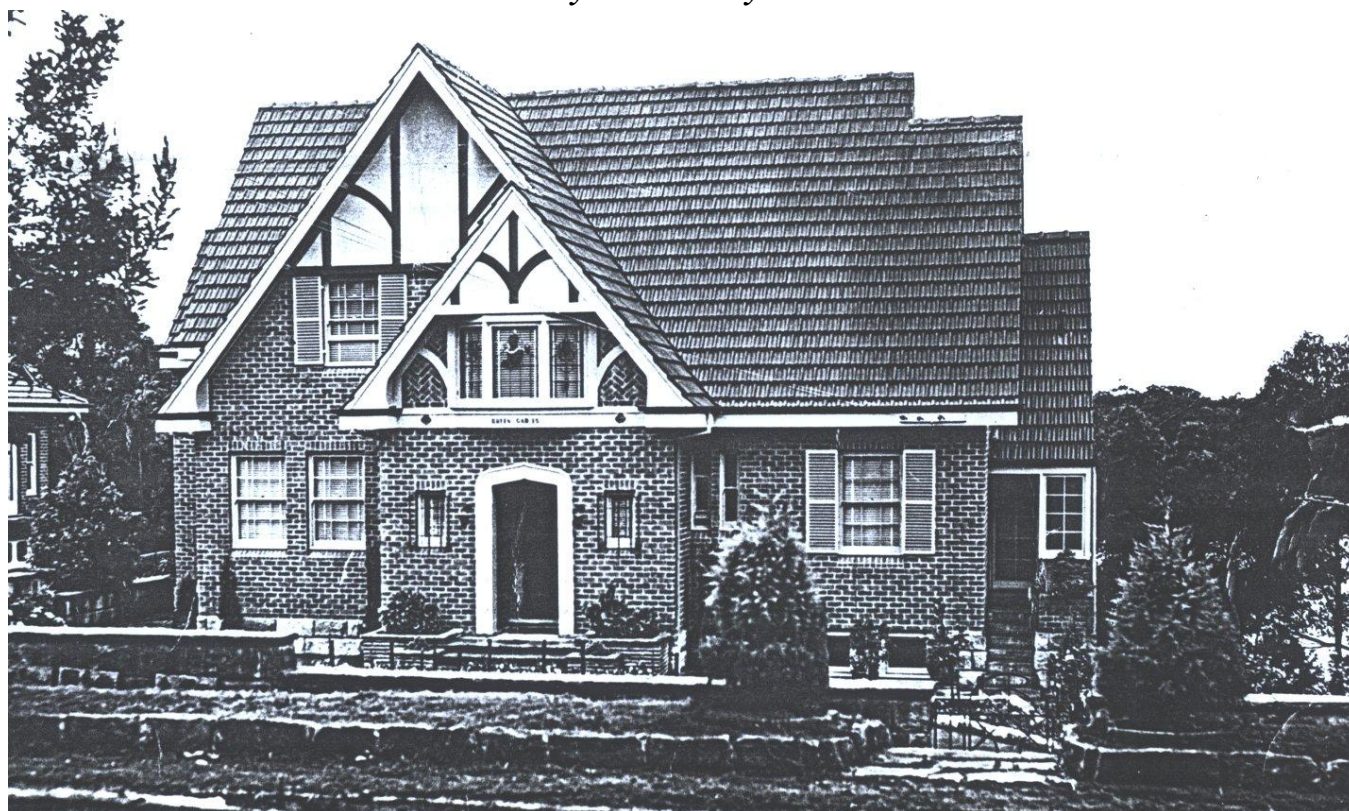
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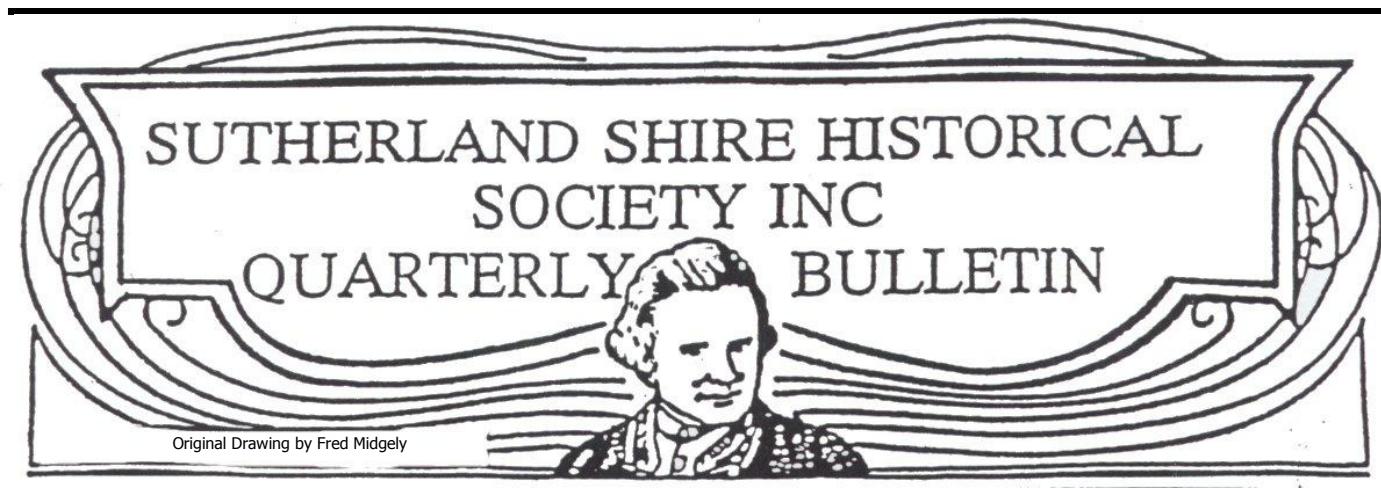
‘Green Gables’, Kangaroo Point: Heritage Under Threat

by Edward Duyker



*Her eyes dwelt affectionately on Green Gables, peering through its network of trees and reflecting the sunlight back from its windows in several little coruscations of glory. Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942), *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), chapter XXVII. The story of Green Gables continues on Page 15.*

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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Meetings of the Society are held monthly on the third Friday at 7.45pm at the Stapleton Centre, Stapleton Street, Sutherland.

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Valentina Craig

Disclaimer

The individual comment, articles and Office Bearers reports that appear in this Bulletin are the responsibility of the writer/s and in no way reflect the opinions or beliefs of the members or Executive of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

President's Report

Liverpool Asylum: One of the great pleasures of being your President is being given the opportunity to represent the Society at different functions. Recently, on your behalf, I attended the Liverpool Historical Society's handover of documents, 1900-1904, of the Liverpool Asylum (1850-1950) which later became the State Hospital. This, of course, was not where insane people were incarcerated, but it was a home for those unable to work, as well as the frail aged, especially if they had no relatives to care for them. Personal records, letters, even the envelopes with the old stamps still attached (a collector's dream!) were included in the collection. They will be on display at the Liverpool Library, before going to the State Archives. Copies will be held at Liverpool Library for those who wish to peruse them locally. One of the sobering statistics given was that 10,000 people died at that institution, which seems incredible but over 100 years this fact becomes quite reasonable in retrospect. Their preservation is interesting. An unknown elderly man offered them to a member of the LHS some 15 years ago, when one of its members indicated her interest in old records. She took a cursory glance at them, deciding to peruse them later, and they remained in her garage for 15 years, before she decided to clear out the garage, and re-discovered them. Other records had been preserved, but these were from a missing gap, and so were delightedly re-united with those held already. No one knows how they came to be separated.



President Dawn Emerson

Parc Menai Celtic Festival: We, like the Sutherland Music Club, were devastated to hear that the Parc Menai Celtic Festival is no longer being sponsored by council. It has been axed from their budget, and if we wish it to continue, we would have to run it ourselves in conjunction with the Celtic Council of Australia and the Sutherland Music Club. None of these organizations have any separate funding so sponsorship is vital. We have been touting for sponsors, and were even hopeful that Club Manai would help, but they are dubious which is such a pity. The date is planned for the last weekend in February, 2005, but unless we get sponsorship support, the Celtic Festival is finished. Today I met with members of the Celtic Council at Parc Menai to discuss the possible continuation of the Celtic Festival. As we sat by the cromlech, a couple of brilliantly coloured Eastern Rosellas came to land in the cromlech garden near the daffodils which are just raising their heads to herald the coming spring. As we gazed, several pink galahs also came to land on the grass nearby. It seemed to us that they were epitomizing all that we had hoped to promote: this was the mingling of Celtic and Australian culture in a beautiful bushland setting. How sad if our ideals are not to be realized. We are still hoping to fundraise to obtain the Scottish Parliament 300 year old gateways. They have told us they are reserved for us, and free of charge, but if we can't find a sponsor for the freight---we have lost them too for Parc Menai.

The Sentinel: vol. 2, no. 36: Wed. 19th September, 1956: I have received a copy of the above newspaper from a reader from Caringbah. He was visiting his family, and came across the old newspaper and rang to ask if we would like it. Unfortunately the wrapper has become separated from the newspaper, and I don't have his name, to thank him personally, so I do hope he sees this. It talks of the opening of the Shire's Golden Jubilee Celebrations (150 years), --and here we are planning for our Bicentenary! It also noted that the annual Henry Lawson concert (third of the series) would be held in Como reserve the following Sunday, and recorded that Lawson, the famous poet, was one of the pioneers of the Shire. (And our 2005 Heritage Festival is to be held at Como, so hopefully we can pattern a concert on this series?) Other events planned were for a Choral Festival; a Symphony

concert by the Royal Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra; a Celebrity Jazz Concert by Bob Gibson's band; and the finale was a Jubilee Presidential Ball. The Council Engineer was retrenching three of his staff due to the "drastic curtailment of loan funds". Miranda library was getting a "face-lift" for 120 pounds, and Sutherland was due for one next! Thankyou for this peep into the past!

We did so enjoy Helen Bersten's History of the Jews last Friday night, and are looking forward to Ed Duyker's talk next month on Marion Dufresne, French Explorer in Australia, 1771. For our AGM in September, we are looking at showing a vintage film, perhaps George Heavens's film of Sutherland in the Fifties, if we can find a copy---so do come along to the AGM so you won't miss out on this special treat.

Dawn Emerson,
President

Meetings for 2004:

Friday, 20th August, 2004: Dr. Ed Duyker: Marion Dufresne: French Explorer, 1772

Friday, 17th September, 2004 : AGM (and as it is History Week, a vintage film possibly of the Shire)

Friday, 15th October, 2004: Merle Kavanagh: History of Yowie Bay

Friday, 19th November, 2004 Pauline Curby: Pictorial History of Sutherland Shire

Friday, 17th December, 2004: SSHS Christmas Party

Friday, 21st January, 2005: Members' night

Friday, 18th February, 2005: Ms. Christine Yeats, State Archives Office

President's Addendum

The last year, 2003-2004 has been a very busy year for the Society, and in particular the Executive Council, and I can only say how very much I appreciate the support of the members of this committee, and the support of the members in general. We searched our souls and realized we had to start new ventures to keep our public and our members involved. We were commencing to stagnate, and becoming comfortable with our standards of mediocrity. As the Shire Historical Society with the onus of displaying the history of the Birthplace of Modern Australia we had to live up to our name, and start showing some leadership, and branch out into new ventures. Last year, our Curator Allan McGrath in co-operation with our historian member, Daphne Salt erected the Cook Room display, which has excited much comment, and is still on show. This year, once we had agreed to change how we displayed our Museum items, and apply for a grant from Council to build our Menai Pioneer 1900's house patterned on Owen Jones's home, we seemed to be in a constant flurry. We called for tenders, and chose Tom Mc Mahon, as the Project Manager, studied pictures of the Menai house and drew up a plan, and then Tom ordered the materials and we were launched into construction. Council staff were very helpful in finding houses which were being demolished and collecting doors, windows, door handles and similar items to use in our pioneer display home.

Owen Jones's Menai Pioneer 1900's House project: Unfortunately although our Museum Curator, Mr. Allan McGrath was able to help initially in clearing the decks for our project, Allan then fell ill and has only been able to give limited supervision, but he has done what he could by way of advice which has been much appreciated. The bulk of the project fell upon our Vice President and Deputy Museum Curator's shoulders, Mr. Jim Cutbush, and Jim in constant liaison with Allan, has been our guiding force. Jim gathered a few stalwarts around him: Vice-President, Terry Mc Cosker, Doug Perry, Doug Archer, Neville Martiensen, John Risebrow, my husband Cliff and myself and under Tom McMahon's instructions we proceeded to build our Menai Pioneer House. (Forgive me if I have forgotten anyone, especially the silent, earnest workers!) I can't thank all these people enough for their magnificent contribution to this Society Project. It wouldn't have happened without your dedication. We have taken photos of it as we went, and slowly it grew to fruition, and we had a lot of fun doing it.

We sanded, painted, varnished and I personally washed every item of furniture and decoration we have used in the room settings, with Norma Jean Taylor's help, and washed every window. Angela Badger Thomas set to and made all the curtains, doing a sterling job; Marj Blackley lent us her mother's wonderful quilt; Jim's son lent us a bed and wardrobe; Jim's wife lent us some children's clothes---and we were in business! The rest came from our extensive Museum collection. Jim constructed a stove setting, (with "genuine" soot!) and we used our Museum treasure trove of a butterbox cupboard, kerosene tin sink: Flat irons, kitchen utensils, meat safe, cooler, chairs, tables etc. many coming from Menai originally.

Museum Sub-committee: The Pioneer House is almost ready for inspection, once we have made little tags and plaques on each item: what each item is, how it works, and from whence it came. This latter is the hard part, and can only be done either by showcard printing and calligraphy—or the cheap modern way, of using a computer and printer and constructing the labels on the spot. This has to be done in the next couple of months, as our opening date is now **Wednesday, 17th November, 2004** when Mayor Schreiber will be conducting the Opening Ceremony. At the same time we will launch historian member, Merle Kavanagh's book on the History of Yowie Bay. To all those who helped in the constructing and furnishing our Pioneer House, my undying gratitude; one never really knows what strength you have in the committee until people come forward on whom you can count to assist. Jim Cutbush has earnestly requested the formation of a complete Museum Sub-Committee, as he can no longer look after such a big project with just Allan and him to run it. We have to get a regular group of volunteers to not only look after the Museum display on open days, but be prepared to give talks to groups on the history of Menai, and its residents and talk about how they lived. Please see Jim and put your name down now to assist on a monthly roster basis. We are asking for your support; even if you don't feel confident in talking to a group of visitors, could you "babysit" the display so others can conduct tours? It all helps.

Bulletin Sub-Committee: This has been ably run by Les Bursill, who does the sole job of collecting, formatting, and printing the articles and does a superb job, and we are very grateful to have someone of Les's calibre to do this single-handed. Les is also our Research Officer, and is kept busy answering questions from our web-site. We have realized a drawback with articles that are typed on manual typewriters, as modern scanners cannot scan the print correctly, so if you are contemplating an article for our Bulletin, please type it on a computer, otherwise it will have to be re-typed for publication. However once the Bulletin is printed it has to be sorted, stapled, put into envelopes which are labelled, and then taken to the post office for delivery. They say if you want something done you ask a busy person, well this has all been performed by Jim Cutbush—and he just has so much on his plate he can't do this in future. Do you have special talents enveloping and stapling—if so we NEED you! Les needs a Bulletin sub-committee which will relieve Jim of a lot of these tasks, as Jim has currently quite a personal load to carry. Again, please contact Jim or Les and let them know you can spare a few hours once every three months to help out, and we will be eternally grateful.

Excursion Sub-Committee: Mrs. Aileen Griffiths OAM has been the backbone of this Committee, planning new places for us to see, or going back to ones we haven't visited for some time. Betty McGrath has, for many years been our reliable Booking Clerk, and only resigned when her recent health problems demanded she retire. Society members who enjoy the outings don't realize how much work goes on behind the scenes: planning, arranging, booking, making tickets, and then keeping track of all the moneys to our Treasurer's satisfaction. Aileen has indicated that with her health situation her Dr. has ordered her to slow down, and is stepping down from her position, and Terry McGrath has indicated he may be able to take on more duties now. Thankyou to all those who have assisted Aileen and Betty, including Nola Tunks who helped out recently. We are proposing a special honour for Aileen. We recently approached the Council, noting that our patron, rightly so, is always the Mayor. We asked as a special tribute to one of our founding members, Aileen, could we appoint her as co-patron. Mayor Schreiber wrote to me and said he would be delighted to share the position with a member of such standing. This is a special honour, which if the Society grants this at the AGM, will

mean Aileen is ex-officio a member of the Executive Council, and we would be delighted to have her attend whenever her health allows. It is an unique honour to an unique lady.

Committee members: Mina Whybourne our ever-competent Secretary does a superb job, keeping me Les, can you fix the margin Please! on my toes, recording our meetings accurately, and is ever-efficient. She even collars unattended cheques and looks after them, as I discovered when I brought one in to pay Council, and it disappeared at a committee meeting! I had to cancel it, ---then Mina found it in her briefcase (perhaps we should make her the Treasurer!) Jokes aside, Mina is a tower of strength, keeping me apprised of correspondence received, and engagements we have been asked to attend. Andrew Platfoot our Treasurer, has faithfully kept our books, even when he doesn't have a lot of time to spare, and does our BAS reports, GST etc. I admire anyone who takes this job on. It requires a very special person to keep our funds in order. Andrew helped out when the former Treasurer retired, and is looking forward to someone else taking this job on at the AGM. Thank you Andrew, for helping us out when no one else was available, or felt brave enough to do it

Dr Ed Duyker, our own Book Review Editor: has been diligent in ensuring that we are aware of some of the best historical works which have just been published, so we may acquire them for our bookshelves. He is forthright but fair, and his scholarship is a great addition to our committee. Marj Blackley, our Publicity Officer, valiantly sends off publicity about our coming meetings, which occasionally becomes muddled in the press, and even though I also fax the Leader several times to correct it, and 'phone them, we still have difficulty in getting the guest speaker recorded correctly. Other times it's the venue wrongly recorded, and we have to leave a note outside the door of the venue designated, so our members can find the correct one—but don't give up Marj; it's not your fault!

To our other Committee members, Wendy Fyfe and Betty Greentree we do value your attendance at Committee meetings, and appreciate your advice and input. Our gratitude to our Solicitor Mr. Michael Solari, who has consented to be on call should be we ever have need of his advice, and this is much appreciated. We didn't get around to appointing an Auditor at the last AGM, as we were in a state of flux, but we will have to remedy this. Two other people who slave away every meeting night without any recognition are Doug and Betty Perry, always having our welcome cuppa ready, and always ready with a smile to greet the thirsty throng. This is highly valued, especially on these cold winter nights—thanks guys! Every Society can be judged by its membership, and I am constantly grateful to the combined knowledge and talents of our members which overawes me and often leaves me feeling quite inadequate. If only I could get some of you to write down some of your memories so we can share your knowledge with others! We wouldn't have Les begging everyone for articles; and the Bulletin would be a breeze! I notice my History of Menai is on its second reprint run, starting all over again in the Menai District Community News which is published by Shire Life. I have heavily revised it and added much new content since it first went to press and I guess I should give it to Les for the Bulletin—it's almost a new work!

To our Council, the General Manager, Mr. Rayner, and the Mayor who is our patron, we thank firstly Clr. Blight, and now Clr. Schreiber, for their ready advice and assistance. As mentioned previously we receive great support from our council officers and this is of considerable assistance in our endeavours. We enjoy setting up displays for our Council as we know our efforts are appreciated, although we would like the new councillors to come along to our Museum and see what we do, and would be delighted if they came along to our meeting to hear our guest speakers! Please accept this as an open invitation. Again thank you everyone for your support; I often feel there are so many members more talented than I who should be your President, but I can't tell you how proud I am to have held that position, and I trust my leadership is assisting our Sutherland Shire Historical Society to blossom and grow, as well as the members enjoying the benefits of membership and sharing my pride in belonging to such a friendly but educative organization.

Dawn Emerson.

President, Sutherland Shire Historical Society

From The Editor's Desk

This is the last Bulletin before our AGM and it is always a crowded bulletin with all the reports and agenda page and renewal page. In this edition we are quadruple blessed - we have articles by four of the most respected historians of the Shire all contributing simultaneously.

Dr (and Knight of France) Ed Duyker, Pauline Curby, Daphne Salt and Garriok Duncan have all spent a very large portion of their life in the study of History and the study of the Sutherland Shire.

Just finding or giving preference of location within the Bulletin (to any of them) fills me with trepidation. Each of them has contributed valuable and very original research in their articles and each of the articles deals with issues directly affecting the Shire.

In this day of Philistines, here I am surrounded by people who know and understand a very important part of our society, our civilisation. These people have the power to know, and from knowledge predict the future. In other societies they would be revered as Oracles; in this footy ridden society they take a back seat to mediocrity.

Even our Prime Minister seems obsessed with sporting achievements whilst our academic standards and opportunity to go to University plunge below the horizon, due to his Governments budget cuts and taxes on education (HECS).

Rome, arguably the greatest of the ancient civilizations fell, some say, due to a pre-occupation with the pleasures of the Games and the bread supplied by politicians (bread and circuses).

Every day I come across people, usually young people (up to 30) whose general knowledge and historical knowledge appears non-existent. Yet these same people can tell you who the leading teams are in the Rugby League, or who is the most prominent golfer, or any number of athletic pursuits.

The same people appear proud to exclaim that they know nothing about emerging technology or computers. Except of course how to operate a mobile phone and spend endless hours text-messaging friends and acquaintances.

In an era where information, and the technology that controls or disseminates it is king, we here in Australia still revere fossil fuels and sheep as a resource in the most arid country on earth. Even our council appears ready to destroy cultural and heritage related activities in favour of saving a very few dollars. It's time we awoke from our dream and met our future.

Les Bursill Editor 2004

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Our year, July 2003 to June 2004, was one of interesting and stimulating monthly meetings covering varied topics provided by gifted and. Well informed speakers.

We had moved from the Multi-Purpose Centre in August to the Stapleton Community Centre, a more comfortable venue with lesser rent. On average, attendances have been at 25 - some larger, some disappointingly smaller.

JULY

Mr. Terry McCosker, a Life Member of the Society and our Coach Captain on many excursions over the years, presented a series of magnificent slides he had taken on our excursions and asked members to identify them. Mr. Jim Cutbush had the most correct answers - he had listened and observed and retained the information. A very enjoyable evening of reminiscence.

AUGUST

"That's funny - I thought I'd forgotten that!" - presented by Mr. Bob Mitchell who specialised in Oral History. He stressed how important it was for families to record "oral" history before senior members passed on or lost their memories - childhood, adolescence, depression years, War years - triumphs and tragedies. We all determined to record our memories forthwith!

SEPTEMBER

The Annual General Meeting was held and we were delighted that Councillor Dawn Emerson was happy to continue as our President. At this meeting, we were pleased to honour Mrs. Betty McGrath and Mrs. Mina Whybourne with Life Membership of the Society in recognition of their service. Councillor Hurley represented the Mayor and conducted our election of officers for the ensuing year.

OCTOBER

We had the privilege of meeting Mr. Paul McLeay, a member of the Society who is now the member for Heathcote in the State Parliament. Mr. McLeay told us of his early life and upbringing - his father, Mr. Leo McLeay also a member of Parliament. He had been always interested in political life, had been a public servant, assistant secretary of the Public Service Association and now the member for Heathcote. He is a very personable young man and has a great gift of communicating.

NOVEMBER

Dr. Ed Duyker, a member of our Society, spoke to us regarding his book "Citizen Labillardiere" - one of the great traveller-naturalists of the 18th Century,

his feats being largely unknown in Australia. Dr. Duyker showed some splendid- slides he had taken following the life of de Labillardiere from France to the Pacific - Tonga - Australia. It was a most fascinating and entertaining story and Dr. Duyker's research so thorough. Several members purchased Dr. Duyker's book.

DECEMBER

We had the pleasure of seeing the film "40,000 Horsemen" - organised by Mr. Les Bursill and Mr. Terry McCosker per computer. It was very sad to see Kurnell sand-hills where the film was made, so towering and majestic and think of the way they are now. Everyone enjoyed the film - our Christmas meeting.

JANUARY

Members' night was very entertaining - Mr. Terry McCosker told us of the early days of Gympie and had slides of the early shops, the bush tracks across to the Station - so much growth in such a short time.

Mrs. Aileen Griffiths CAM, showed slides of early Cronulla - a typical holiday village - the tram which ran from Sutherland Station to Shelly Beach - the growth of the main street - incredible expansion once the railway came through in 1939.

Mr. John Risebrow told us of the Water tanks at Waterfall where the steam trains used to collect water for their journeys - he had some comprehensive and fascinating knowledge to impart.

FEBRUARY

Mr. Cliff Emerson gave us a most enlightening address into the life of Mr. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, a remarkable man, an engineer of high repute who had designed and been responsible for the building of the Bristol Bridge and for the building of "The Great Britain" the largest passenger liner of that time - built in the Bristol shipyards - the ship had made many trips to Australia .

Mr. Emerson showed an interesting video of the ship's history (from the National Museum) which was so informative - a fascinating story and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

MARCH

Mr. Ron Scobie, an eminent artist who specialises in painting; the "Endeavour", Captain Cook's ship, in the various ports of call on his voyages - Mr. Scobie had much comprehensive knowledge of Captain Cook's voyages and we learned a great deal more of his skill as a navigator and cartographer. Mr. Scobie's paintings were quite magnificent and he had brought many to show us, a most enjoyable history lesson.

APRIL

We were pleased to welcome Mr. Keith Wrighton to our meeting - he told us of the Pigeon Corps in World War II stationed in New Guinea and of the wonderful exploits of these small birds specially trained to fly long distances with important messages, sometimes a matter of life and death. They were very involved in the battle for Milne Bay saving many lives by flying the relevant message through.

A pigeon involved in the D day landings in Normandy had been awarded a special Award - he had flown 240 miles in 5 hours. Mr. Wrighton had many tales to tell of pigeons' exploits - unknown heroes!

MAY.

Mrs. Angela Badger Thomas, also a member of the Society told us of the research involved in the writing of her book - "Charlotte Badger - Buccaneer".

Charlotte had been deported to NSW from UK for stealing 4 guineas, six months on the ocean in awful conditions, arriving in Sydney and then being transferred to Van Dieman's Land, the ship being taken over by some of the crew en route, whereby all became "buccaneers". Mrs. Thomas blended fact and fiction in her book and told Charlotte's life in the first person. A most exciting story.

JUNE.

Mrs. Susan Duyker was our speaker on a most interesting and unusual subject - Dutch Trading Posts in Japan. The Dutch had large trading posts in Firando and Nagasaki and were very involved for many years. Then the Portuguese came and the Dutch withdrew. Mrs. Duyker showed some very interesting slides of the remains of the buildings which had been erected centuries ago by the traders. Many questions were asked regarding this early European involvement with Japan.

We are grateful to Mrs. Betty and Mr. Doug Perry and their helpers for attending to our supper arrangements so happily. Their service is very much appreciated by members who all enjoy fellowship during this time of the meetings.

We are very fortunate to have Mrs. Dawn Emerson as our President. Dawn did not seek re-election in the September Council elections, (she having been a very active member of the Sutherland Shire Council for some twelve years). We wish her and her husband, Cliff many happy years of retirement and we are so pleased that Dawn will continue with us as President and we hope for many years to come.

May I say a sincere thank you to President Dawn and all the members of the Executive Council for their support and co-operation during the past year.

***Mina Whybourne
Hon. Sec. July 2004***

SSHS Bulletin – Excursion - Annual Report

As a change of annual meeting dates was made in 2003, we had not concluded the year's excursions when the last report was done. Therefore a report is included here of the last excursion for 2003.

We travelled to Nowra in November to meet that Society's president and tour guide, Mrs Robyn Florance, at Hanging Rock. After morning tea we embarked on the program of visits to historic places and sites that had been prepared for us.

Firstly we visited Meroogal, the famous cottage that is now a house museum and then we inspected the Society's museum. As a group we have had two previous visits to the Nowra district, but what was planned for us on this occasion included so many places in the area not known to us previously. It was like a new world. Having luncheon at Shoalhaven Heads was an insight into how the area has developed. Again we thank Robyn Florance for a most satisfactory day.

Because the weather was so hot in the summer we decided not to have a February outing and made plans for a May trip instead. We spent three hours on a cruise on the Hacking River on 29 May. Whilst most of us have travelled on the River in earlier times, we still enjoyed the day. The launch company is to be congratulated on the updating of the photographs they provided for our viewing. We have assisted them by providing photos and notes from our previous cruises. This excursion reminded us of the many wonderful local places that can be visited.

Need I say, on both outings we were fortunate to be able to provide perfect weather, as is usual on our outings! It was a pity Betty McGrath was unable to come with us on the River trip because of her illness. I take this opportunity to thank her most sincerely for all the assistance she has given as booking clerk for a long time. She has always carried out her duties to perfection.

I, too, shall not be seeking re-election to the excursion committee on the insistence of my medical advisor that I limit my community involvement. No further outings have been planned so that the incoming committee will not be left with a partly arranged outing to cope with.

Thank you to Ron Wood and his staff at Tiger Tours for their cooperation over the years. I would also like to thank the members who supported the tours that we arranged on your behalf for such a long time and good luck and best wishes to the incoming committee members.

Aileen M. Griffiths OAM

Museum Report

The past 12 months have not been kind, health wise for our curator Allan McGrath and his wife Betty, but it all seems to be getting better for them both — even if progress has been slow.

Australia Day was celebrated by our society with a larger than normal photographic exhibition of the Cronulla & Kurnell areas. This was held in the ballroom of the North Cronulla Surf Club and was favourably commented on by more than 800 visitors on the day.

Thanks to the foresight of our President Dawn Emerson, who came up with the idea of building a replica of Owen Jones home 1895 (first home in Menai) and a generous donation of \$3000 from the Sutherland Shire Council, we embarked upon the biggest project this society has undertaken to date and we managed to get it finished for Heritage Week. Thanks to Tom McMahon and a small, but dedicated team of members who helped bring alive this year's theme of "Foundations of Tomorrow in the year of the Built Environment." During Heritage Week we had a total of 270 people visit the exhibition. This exhibition will continue for the next 2 ½ years as a lead up to the Sutherland Shire Council's 100th Anniversary celebrations. It is intended that the interior of the home will change during this period with special exhibitions of needlecraft, toys, games, fashions, seasons, year's etc.

Our first school visit to the new exhibition was by 4th Class students, teachers & support parents from St. Catherines, Gymea. This visit went very well and the group enjoyed looking at both the Jones home & the Captain Cook exhibitions.

A number of generous donations both large & small were given to the Museum during Heritage Week 2004.

Some of these donations being:

- Daphne Salts' "James Cook" exhibition that is in our smaller room, plus a signed Prayer Book that was given to Sarah Wentworth in 1849 by William Bland. Many thanks from the Society to our (Author) member Daphne.
- Another donation came from Mr Ivan Webber of 3 suitcases & 2 boxes of memorabilia from the Boer War through to the Second World War. Thank you once again Ivan.
- Donated by Marjorie Blackley was her Mothers beautiful 90 year old Marcella Quilt, which is now on the main bed of the Jones exhibition. Thank you Marjorie.
- Foundation member Mr Richard Peir has donated a number of items of early school days, family history, firefighting history and other items of local interest. Thank you Richard.
- The descendants of Mr W H Mitchell. Esq. JP, donated a silver trowel from the laying of the foundation stone for the Jannali School of Arts 1/10/1928. Thank You.
 - Mr Mark McGrath has generously loaned his beautiful enamelled bed in the main bedroom, along with a lovely cedar wardrobe & chair for the duration of the exhibition. Thank you Mark.
- Our member Angela Badger has loaned her old dolls house & tablecloth. Angela is

also responsible for the making of all the curtains in the Jones home. Thank you Angela.

Finally I would like to send out a big **THANK YOU** to all who have loaned & donated large & small items that make the Owen Jones home complete.

A big **THANK YOU** also to all of you who helped and supported me during the building of the home.

The Museum continues to be open in the Sutherland School of Arts on East Parade, Sutherland, on the first Saturday of the month from 9:30am until 3:30pm. Special arrangements can also be made by phoning 9521 2227 or 9521 3721.



Jim Cutbush
Assistant Curator

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 38TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc. will be held on Friday, 17th September, 2004 in the Stapleton Community Centre, Stapleton Avenue, Sutherland at 8 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation and Adoption of Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting.
4. Submission and Adoption of the Annual Report of the Executive Council.
5. Hon. Treasurer's Financial Statement and Balance Sheet for the period 1st July 2003 to 30th June 2004.
6. NOTICE OF MOTION: That Honorary Life Membership be conferred on Mrs. Dawn Emerson in recognition of her service to the Society. Proposed Mrs. A. Griffiths OAM, seconded Mrs.M. Whybourne.
7. NOTICE OF MOTION: That Mrs. Aileen Griffiths OAM become Co-Patron with the Mayor of Sutherland Shire Council in recognition of her long and dedicated service to the Society Proposed Mrs. Dawn Emerson, seconded Mr. Neville Martiensen.
8. Election of Officers for 2004-2005.
- 9, GENERAL BUSINESS: Pertaining to the Annual General Meeting.

Membership Renewal 2004/5

The Society's financial year commences 1st of July each year and concludes on the 30th June of the following year.

In accordance with the above, membership renewals are due on the 1st of July each year. Renewal forms on this page (below) should be completed and handed to the Honorary Treasurer at the monthly general meeting or posted to the Society using the address shown on the renewal form. The renewal application should also contain the appropriate subscription fee.

To assist with accurate record keeping each member is required to complete an individual renewal form. It should be noted that a failure to pay the membership fee within the three months from the end of the Financial Year will result in a lapse of membership.

RECEIPTS Receipts may be collected from the Treasurer at monthly meetings. If you wish to have your receipt posted to you a stamped self addressed envelope must be included with your renewal form and payment.

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Application for Renewal of Membership 2004/5

TITLE: Mr.Mrs.Ms.

Family Name.....

Given Name.....

Postal Address.....

.....Postcode.....Tel. No.....

Please find my Subscription for 2004/5 enclosed herewith
Annual Adult Subscription - \$20.00 + \$2.00 GST = \$22.00
Junior member / Fulltime Student - \$10.00 + \$1.00 GST = \$11.00

SignedDate.....

Post to -Treasurer, Sutherland Shire Historical Society, PO Box 389, Sutherland NSW 1499

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Application for Renewal of Membership 2003/4

TITLE: Mr.Mrs.Ms.

Family Name.....

Given Name.....

Postal Address.....

.....Postcode.....Tel. No.....

Please find my Subscription for 2004/5 enclosed herewith
Annual Adult Subscription - \$20.00 + \$2.00 GST = \$22.00
Junior member / Fulltime Student - \$10.00 GST + \$11.00

SignedDate.....

Post to -Treasurer, Sutherland Shire Historical Society, PO Box 389, Sutherland NSW 1499

‘Green Gables’, Kangaroo Point:

In the *Sutherland Shire Heritage Study: Built Heritage Report*, vol. 2: p. 26 ‘Green Gables’, No. 10-12 Kangaroo Point Road, Kangaroo Point, is described as a ‘particularly outstanding example’ of Tudor Revival in the Sutherland Shire.¹

Indeed it was one of only two examples mentioned in the study; the other is ‘Coombe Grange’, 52 Taloombi Street, Cronulla. The evaluation criteria for its eventual listing on the Sutherland Shire Local Environment Plan were its aesthetic qualities (considered ‘rare’) and its significance as a representative example of this style in the Sutherland Shire. The residence is a charming local landmark with high-pitched roof, half-timbered gables, decorative fretwork fascia, leadlight oriel window, herringbone brickwork and an impressive doorway with a centred-arch and quadriform mouldings: in short, all the brash eclecticism of the Old English revival style. It is also one of the few remaining buildings of its period left on Kangaroo Point.



‘Green Gables’ was built by Sydney Keith Bayer (1902—1981) and his wife Clarisse Elizabeth Bayer née Hutson (1910—1978) apparently in stages between 1946² and 1952.³ The building was very probably designed by Mrs Bayer who had studied architecture at Sydney Technical College between 1929 and 1931⁴ and had worked as a draughtsperson.⁵ When she married at St Ann’s Catholic Church, North Bondi, on 3

¹ *Sutherland Shire Heritage Study: Built Heritage Report*, Perumel Murphy Wu Pty. Ltd., Surry Hills, 1993, vol.2: p. 26.

² See statement of account, Wildman & Co. 27 August, 1946 and receipt signed by J. Innes in the name of S. K. Bayer C/- Dustflo Vacuum Cleaner Company, 363 Pitt Street, Sydney, 11 October 1946.

³ Mrs Rita Phillips, who purchased land at 42 Tara Street, Sylvania in 1949, recalls the existence of the house in the early 1950s; Mrs K. J. Bayer, of GyMEA, widow of a nephew of Sydney Bayer, recalls construction work on the house during construction of her own home in 1952, telephone interviews, 16 July, 2004.

⁴ Bronwyn Hanna, *Absence and Presence: A Historiography of Early Women Architects in New South Wales*, Ph.D. Thesis, UNSW, 2000, p. 334.

⁵ Interview with Mr Don Bayer (born 1924) son of Graham Arthur Bayer and nephew of Sydney Keith Bayer, Sandringham, 19 July 2004. According to Bronwyn Hanna, employment in an architectural practice was a precondition for enrolment in the architecture course at Sydney Technical College.

May 1934, she described her occupation as ‘architectural profession’,⁶ however, she was not registered with the Board of Architects. It is not yet known which architectural practice she was employed by—perhaps that of a relative. Given the small number of women employed as architects in Australia at the time, Clarisse’s likely role as the designer of her own home adds to the social and historical significance of ‘Green Gables’.⁷

Sydney Keith Bayer was born in Paddington on 27 January 1902,⁸ of devout Catholic-Bavarian and Irish stock.⁹ His father, Arthur, was a travelling wine and spirit merchant. Sydney proved to be an accomplished salesman in his own right and became ‘Hoover Sales Ace’ for Australia in 1934.¹⁰ He eventually established his own firm, ‘Dustflo’, which specialized in reconditioning vacuum cleaners. This business thrived during the Second World War when new vacuum cleaners were almost impossible to purchase. Sydney Bayer was also a partner in the firm of Bayer, McDonald, Day which sold home appliances in Goulburn Street, Sydney. This company held the lucrative distribution rights for the ‘Hygea’ septic tank system. Furthermore, Bayer attained some prominence in racing circles when his horse ‘Timor’ won the Epsom Handicap in 1957 and the Brisbane Cup in 1958. He was also a significant donor to the building fund for the Church of Our Lady of the Way, Sylvania.¹¹

Construction of the sea wall, excavation and construction of the retaining wall for the boatshed at Kangaroo Point was completed by Wildman & Co. (50 Railway Street, Marrickville), in late-August 1946 at a cost of £114.¹² This was when the property was still officially owned by Sydney Bayer’s theatre-manager brother Gordon. It was transferred to Sydney’s name in 1948 and to joint tenancy with his wife Clarisse in 1952 (presumably on completion of the original residence). A stonemason lived on site in a caravan for an extended period during the construction of the sandstone walls and terraces,¹³ which are of a high standard. Clarisse Bayer was a passionate gardener and much of her time was devoted to landscaping and shaping the grounds with the assistance of a full-time gardener.¹⁴ The eastern (waterfront) side of the property has

⁶ Certificate of Marriage, No. C363016, dated 3 May 1934.

⁷ For further discussion of this issue, see: Bronwyn Hanna and Julie Willis, *Women Architects in Australia 1900—1950*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Red Hill, A.C.T., 2001.

⁸ Birth Certificate No. 15282/362, dated 27 January 1902.

⁹ Sydney was baptized in St Francis Church, Paddington, on 9 February 1902. His grandfather was Dr Frederick Bayer, a Munich-born graduate of the University of Erlangen, who arrived in South Australia as surgeon-superintendent of the *Heloise*, on 17 March 1847. Dr Bayer had fled Germany after assisting a young student mortally wounded in a duel and refusing to name the other party; see *In Memoriam Frederick Charles Bayer MD*, no date.

¹⁰ With a remarkable 71 vacuum cleaner sales in 12 weeks; see J. S. Drysdale, Director, Hoover (Australia) Limited, to Sidney [sic] Bayer 20 June 1934.

¹¹ Interview with Mr Don Bayer, Sandringham, 19 July 2004.

¹² See statement of account, Wildman & Co. 27 August, 1946 and receipt signed by J. Innes in the name of S. K. Bayer C/- Dustflo Vacuum Cleaner Co., 363 Pitt Street, Sydney, 11 October 1946.

¹³ Interview with Mr Don Bayer, Sandringham, 19 July 2004; telephone interview with Mrs K. J. Bayer, of Gympie, 16 July, 2004.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

undergone significant changes, but the original front façade (judging from photographs annexed) retains its integrity, despite the more recent southern extension.

Clarisse Bayer, like her husband, was born in Paddington. However, unlike him, she appears to have been of English descent.¹⁵ Her paternal Anglo-Saxon origins may explain an interest in idealized English traditional architecture and the strong visual imagery of the Tudor revival style. One of the other Bayer racehorses was named 'Empire Link', which is also suggestive of nostalgic ties to the 'mother country'. Clarisse's background was lower middle class (her father George William Hutson was a tramway inspector) from the inner city, but 'Green Gables' like the transplanted home of rural English gentry, offers an instant image of upper class respectability.¹⁶ Yet here too are allusions to the romantic idyll of 'Green Gables' at Avonlea on Canada's Prince Edward Island, for the Bayer residence almost certainly takes its name from the house in Lucy Maud Montgomery's (1874—1942) novel: *Anne of Green Gables* (1908). It has not been known by any other name. Kangaroo Point on the Georges River, like Avonlea on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 'occupied a little triangular peninsula . . . with water on two sides'.¹⁷ Although Clarisse enjoyed the trappings of wealth, the solace of her garden and a beautiful home, her marriage was childless and she appears to have been an unhappy woman who ultimately fell victim to chronic illness.¹⁸

Sydney and Clarisse Bayer sold 'Green Gables' in 1973 and retired to Snowy Place, Sylvania Waters. Clarisse died on 8 April 1978, aged 68. Sydney died on 21 April 1981, aged 79. They are both buried in Lot 33A of the Roman Catholic Lawn 1 at Woronora Cemetery.

Despite the historical and architectural significance of 'Green Gables', Sutherland Shire Council, at its meeting of 3 May, 2004, resolved to place on public exhibition an amendment to its Draft Local Environment Plan by removing it from the Heritage Schedule. This action was taken despite the unanimous recommendation of Council's own Heritage Committee, which includes a representative from the NSW Heritage Council, on 11 February 2004.

The author wishes to express his thanks to Ms Helen McDonald, Local Studies Librarian, Sutherland Shire Library Service, for her assistance.

¹⁵ Clarisse may also have been of Irish descent, for her mother's maiden name was Feeney. Her parents married in Sydney in 1895.

¹⁶ As Patrick White wrote of his old school, built in the same style: 'The building was a mansion in the Thames Valley Tudor style favoured by the Australian rich in the earlier part of the century. It had been an impressive "residence" when lived in by an important family'; Patrick White, *Flaws in the Glass*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1981, p. 17.

¹⁷ Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), chapt. 1.

¹⁸ Interview with Mr Don Bayer, Sandringham, 19 July 2004.

THE SOCIETY AND SCHOOLS – THE TEACHERS REPLY

This is the follow up to the article which appeared in the May, 2004, edition of the Bulletin, ("Local Historians, Rich in Assets: the Society and Schools - a Discussion Paper", pp. 10-15) and any page references following will be to that article. It has taken much longer to get information back from the schools I approached.

There were five high schools - Caringbah, Engadine, Kirrawee, Menai and Woollooware. All were schools with which I had professional or personal contacts. However, only four schools responded. To my great embarrassment, the one school I was not able to get any response from was Engadine High, where I had taught from 1985 to 1999. I sent each school a copy of the Bulletin (vol. 7.1) and information on the Society, its aims and how I thought both could interact. The replies were mixed and illustrated the point I made in the original article that there would be no spruiker at the door dragging in the schools (p. 11).

Firstly some general comments. Three of the schools had had no prior contact with the Society; only one school had had close contacts with the Society but not recently. There was a lack of knowledge about heritage resources available (particularly in the Local Studies Collection at Sutherland Library). Likewise, they were unfamiliar with the Council's Heritage Section. Only one school admitted to no real interest in establishing links with the Society.

Apart from this last school, the particular comments by the others were not that divergent and reflected the main area of convergence between the Society and schools - the general area of local history.

(I) Local History and Heritage

Three respondents admitted that the closest and most obvious point of contact would be in the areas of local history and Heritage. And one school wanted self contained talks on Shire issues such as transport, entertainment and cemeteries etc. Though, concern was expressed about the mode of delivery. What the school really wanted was resource kits developed by the Society which the teachers at the school would deliver, i.e. they wanted others to do their work for them.

Also, this school and two others saw the Society's producing CD-roms on Heritage issues to be valuable. In this context, one school mentioned an interest in reprints of articles on local history and Heritage issues from past copies of the Bulletin.

(ii) Site Study

A site study is compulsory in both Stage 4 (Yrs 7 and 8) and Stage 5 (Yrs 9 and 10). Most schools tend to visit the site in Stage 4. However, they are encouraged to do a "virtual" site study in Stage 5.

Schools have considerable freedom in this area and there is no external regulation of what they do. One school admitted to doing its Stage 4 site study in-house, which is in violation of the intent of the Syllabus.

In addition to CD-roms on heritage, can the Society produce virtual site studies on CD-rom? This would provide (additional) school based resources for the site study in Stage 4 and could actually provide the Stage 5 site study.

(iii) Contact History

Contact History is a compulsory part of the new Stage 4 Syllabus, i.e. Yrs 7 and 8. While schools have the option to look at contact in other cultures, i.e. in southern Africa, North America or the Pacific, the Australian context is compulsory. And the contact history of Indigenous Australians and the British began in the Shire.

If the Society adopted my "assets" approach (p. 13), the Society could make a great contribution in this area. Excursions to the rock carvings at Jibbon Beach are now old hat. Does the Society have access to other more interesting, i.e. less well known and frequented, sites? CD-roms would allow schools to explore such sites in the "comfort" of their own amenities particularly useful for sites where access is not allowed.

(iii) Local Archaeology.

This is a field which would combine aspects of (i), (ii) and (iii). While (Australian) History and Geography, are compulsory, schools can offer "elective" History and Geography. Very few schools would have a demand for either elective subject. Caringbah was the only school to mention elective History and the Head Teacher (History) raised this in the context of both the production of CD-roms and my comments about the particular expertise of certain Society members.

(iv) Publication of Student Work

All schools supported this idea and said it would be the most effective way of building the link between the Society and Schools. However, all schools assumed that the initiative was directed at Extension History (i.e. the old 3-Unit in Yr 12) and added the proviso that the topics would not fit within the area of local history.

(v) Museum

The only school that was aware of the Museum was Menai; it was the only school that admitted to having had any contacts with the Society previously. In the previous article, I admitted to ignorance about the Museum (pp. 13-14). Fortunately, my ignorance was resolved during the Heritage Festival in April, 2004. In the previous article, I made a brief comment about the current role of museums (p. 14). I would like to expand on that comment here.

If the Museum is a "static" exhibition which students merely look at, then the effort in creating it was wasted. It has to be "interactive" and challenge the students' imagination. This presents a major problem since the part which would interest high schools in the reconstruction of the 1920's house.

However, the School, of Arts, which houses the Museum, has a back room which is reasonably large. I think this room is the key to the successful use of the Museum. When I was there in April, 2004, Jim Cutbush told me that the Society had a large collection of artifacts not on display.

These artifacts need to be catalogued and used whenever schools are visiting the Museum. Is it possible to mount displays on themes requested by schools?

Worksheets need to be prepared to engage students' imagination. Hopefully, family of the original owners of the house still live locally. Can they provide photographic and documentary material on the house?

Also, why not provide workshops in applied history? The focus for schools would not be the artifacts themselves but the skills required by the students to cope with the artifacts on show.

(vi) Immediate Action

Most of the initiatives described above would require some lead time before they could be effective. This lead time would probably require considerable involvement by a relative small number of the Society's membership, those with the requisite skills and experience in teaching.

Schools would be required to pay a fee for using the Museum and any other services provided. This should not be a problem. The business approach to education was introduced into NSW by the Greiner Liberal government in 1988. In addition, the production of resource based CD roms is anticipated by schools. However, they might not all be interested in the same topics.

Yet, there is one link which could be established before the end of this year. Send a flyer to all Shire high schools announcing the Society's Extension History Essay Prize. The date for the submission to the Board of Studies for these essays is towards the end of Term 3. So, with a flurry of activity, the first prize(s) could be awarded for the academic year, 2004. The Society will have to decide the cash value of the prize. Hopefully, contacts with the Sutherland Council can create an occasion at which the prize can be awarded. The purpose of the Council link is to ensure publicity, either in some Council publication or preferably in the pages of The Leader.

The prize will be awarded to the best Extension History Essay written by a student enrolled in a Shire school in either or both of the following categories (at the Society's discretion). The two categories are: (i) local history - of the schools I contacted, Caringbah has a student, the daughter of a prominent member of the Society, writing an Extension essay on a local history topic; (ii) history in general - ancient, medieval , modern or whatever.

The intent is, of course, to encourage local history at this level. If the best essay is, in fact, on a local history topic, then perhaps only one prize is awarded in any year. Otherwise two prizes are awarded. This decision will be at the discretion of the Society. Of course, The Society will publish the prize winning essay(s) in the Bulletin.

Garriock Duncan

For King and Country

In these troubled times it is interesting to examine the impact of an international event such as war on a local community. Sometimes one finds similar patterns in many varied locations and at other times there are significant differences. In Sutherland Shire local people reacted to the War as they did in communities all over the country – young men joined up and women and older men joined in various ‘patriotic’ activities. One significant difference was that - probably due to the impact of the tramline opening and the popularity of Cronulla as a holiday resort – the local building industry was robust during these years.

In August 1914 Australia joined in the war that had broken out in Europe. War news was on everyone’s lips and false rumours abounded. As the atmosphere of excitement and agitation built up in the ‘village’ of Cronulla, the Vennard family prepared a garden fete in aid of the soldiers at their residence in Woollooware Road. Similar functions would soon be held at *Boronia*, the Doust family home overlooking Gunnamatta Bay.¹⁹ A ‘Belgian’ dance was organised and on Easter Monday 1915 Cronulla SLSC held a carnival to ‘help the Belgians’ who were supposedly suffering German atrocities.²⁰

Loyal residents in other parts of Sutherland Shire also mobilised in support of the war effort. Money was raised for a ‘travelling kitchen’ for the troops and rifle ranges were set up so potential recruits could practise. As enlisted men were farewelled -sometimes with empty rhetoric but always with honest tears - the *St George Call* featured photos of recruits on its front page under the banner headline: ‘For King and Country’. Corporal Jack McGeechan of Sylvania, 19-year-old William Hill of Cronulla were featured and on another occasion three Cronulla ‘surf-soldiers’: Ern Tidmarsh, Noel Heuston and Jack Emanuel.²¹ In the first year of the War more than 80 Sutherland Shire men enlisted. At one farewell function in Sutherland a departing group were each presented with a sheepskin vest, and a choice of either a knife or a letter wallet. In contrast a group of 21 men leaving from Cronulla SLSC were presented with solid silver cigarette cases at their farewell.²²

By January 1916 so many lifesavers had enlisted that the Council decided to employ an additional Council lifesaver, for the benefit – it was said – of the ‘squibs and shirkers’.²³ Later, with the club ‘practically disbanded’ young lads stepped into the breach under the direction of club captain Frank Stroud, a middle aged man who spent the War years in fervent patriotic activity.²⁴ Eventually a Junior Life

¹⁹ *SGC*, 26 September 1914, p. 5; *HP*, 20 October 1916, p. 1.

²⁰ *SGC*, 3 April 1915, p. 4 & 10 April 1915, p. 3.

²¹ See for example *SGC*, 7 August 1915, p. 1 & 11 December 1915, p. 1; 3 March 1917, p. 1. Also *SGC*, 3 April 1915, p. 4 & 10 April 1915, p. 3.

²² *SGC*, 15 October 1915 & 13 November 1915

²³ *SGC*, 1 January 1916, p. 5.

²⁴ *SSC Minutes*, 6 October 1916.

Saving Club of 'fine study lads', who performed courageous rescues on a number of occasions, was formed.²⁵ Crowds continued to swarm to Cronulla during the War: the trams were as crowded as usual and congestion at Tom Ugly's punt sometimes took four hours to clear.²⁶ This was not the case elsewhere and fewer visitors patronised the National Park.²⁷

By August 1915 when Gallipoli veterans began returning home, a number were admitted to the Cronulla Red Cross Convalescent Home, under the supervision of Rosa Piper, honorary matron and a 'wondrous general'.²⁸ This Red Cross home - 'the first of its kind established in the state' - was supported by donations and local fundraising. Returned soldiers spent an average of 6.5 weeks there and were gently nursed back to health, far from the 'dissipations of the city'. Indeed local people liked to promote their 'healthy little seaside town' where visitors were advised that if they 'needed a cure for the blues, go to Cronulla on a spring morning'. Heavily weighed down with debt, however, Cronulla Red Cross Convalescent Home closed in August 1917.²⁹

From 1915 recruiting marches were held around the country to encourage young men to enlist but also – as at Manly – so they could embark in a group and not in 'dribs and drabs'.³⁰ The South Coast Waratahs – a 'hardy lot' - arrived in Sutherland in December 1915 to a 'hearty' welcome. After a round of patriotic speeches, and with three new recruits, the marchers continued through driving rain towards the Georges River. On the way they were given fruit from Gilmore's orchard and served refreshments at Sylvania before they continued on their way to Hurstville.³¹ Again in September 1918 men of the 'South Coast March to Freedom' were feted with a 'royal welcome' at Boyle's Hall in Sutherland and music and dancing – and a recruiting meeting - at Cronulla. The lads had a good time and no one seemed too worried that 19 bathing costumes – kept on hand for hiring – went missing from the change rooms.³²

As the War progressed the Voluntary Workers' Association (VWA) began its work in Sutherland Shire of helping returned soldiers settle down to civilian life.³³ A number of projects were undertaken including, in June 1918, a state government sponsored soldier settlement of eight blocks at GyMEA. The settlement was located:

²⁵ *HP*, 4 October 1918, p. 2.

²⁶ *SGC*, 10 October 1914, p. 6 & 17 February 1917, p. 3.

²⁷ M. Larkin, *Sutherland Shire, a history to 1939*, Sutherland History Press, Jannali, 1998, op. cit., p. 72.

²⁸ *SGC*, 18 September 1915, p. 4 & 15 January 1916, p. 4.

²⁹ *HP*, 30 June 1916, p. ?; 10 August 1917; 21 September 1917; 20 September 1918; *SGC*, 17 June 1916, p. 3.

³⁰ See, P. Curby, *Seven Miles from Sydney, a History of Manly*, Manly Council, 2001, p. 206.

³¹ *SGC*, 17 December 1915, p. 2 & 18 December 1915, p. 4.

³² *HP*, 6 September 1918 & *SSC Minutes*, 6 November 1918.

³³ *SGC*, 26 August 1916, p. 5 & 2 September 1916, p. 7.

handy to the Sutherland-Cronulla tram, and is on the main road from Sutherland to Tom Ugly's Point. It is beautifully situated and ten minutes walk would bring one to the Georges River.

Land was cleared there and fowl houses and fences erected, as the returned men settling in this convenient location were to take up poultry farming. T. J. Ley MLA promoted the settlement and worked with the Miranda Branch of the Agricultural Bureau regarding its financial arrangements.³⁴

In 1917 a teacher from Mortdale Public School escorted schoolboys – armed with lunch and light mattocks - to 'Heathcote' every Saturday to clear land at the 'soldiers' settlement' there. They did 'good work' as the scrub was 'light', and were rewarded with cakes at knock off time.³⁵ As the use of the term 'Engadine' was not widespread at this time, and the group would have alighted at Heathcote Station, they were in fact probably working at the Engadine soldier settlement. There was no known soldier settlement at Heathcote.³⁶

Another successful VWA project was moving the cottage belonging to Mrs Doherty, Sutherland Shire's first war widow. She lived with her three young children on an 'isolated piece of leasehold land' but was able to move to Oak Road close to the tramline because of 'Mr Palmer's munificent gift' of a block of land. Builders David and George Greig organised the Sutherland VWA in the complex task of dismantling and re-erecting her cottage in its new location.³⁷

At the beginning it was assumed that the War would have a 'depressing effect on land speculation'. While this was not the case initially, especially at Cronulla, land sales did eventually slump.³⁸ In contrast housing construction doubled. This was a time of 'great progress' for Sutherland Shire. In March 1915, for example plans were well under way for the construction of new council chambers at the corner of Eton Street and Railway Parade in Sutherland.³⁹ Building had increased rapidly with 70 new buildings completed that year. A heavy demand for waterfrontages was reported and the headline 'Cronulla is booming' frequently appeared in newspapers.⁴⁰

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why years later, in 1940, there was considerable hostility from returned servicemen to the removal of Cronulla's war memorial from the Kingsway where it had been since 1923, to land opposite the new railway station. Some thought this should be called 'Anzac Park' but it became instead 'Monro Park' in honour of long serving councillor, MLA and high profile real estate agent Joe Monro. To many veterans his was the public face of

³⁴ *HP*, 21 June 1918, p. 2 & 28 June 1918, p. 1.

³⁵ *HP*, 27 April 1917, p. 1; 4 May 1917, p. 1; 25 May 1917, p. 1.

³⁶ This conclusion was reached after discussion with Helen McDonald of Sutherland Library.

³⁷ *HP*, 6 September 1918, p. 1.

³⁸ *SGC*, 10 October 1914, p. 6 & 17 February 1917, p. 3.

³⁹ *SSC Minutes*, 26 October 1914; *HP*, 5 March 1915, p. 1; Larkin, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴⁰ *SGC*, 18 September 1915, p. 4; 31 December 1915, p. 1 & *HP*, 7 January 1916; 28 April 1916.

land speculation that was perceived to have continued in the Shire during the Great War while they were far from home supposedly 'fighting for freedom'.⁴¹

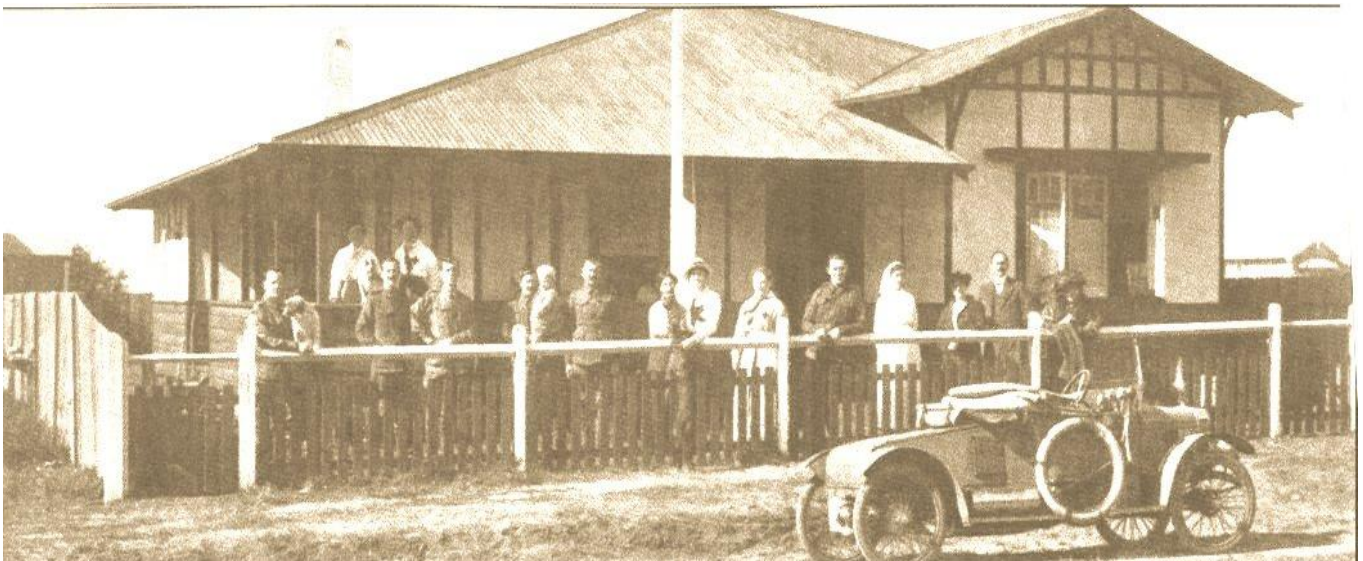
World War I veterans must have felt cheated in more ways than one. Considering that many of them went to war on a false premise, one wonders what their reaction was when the Belgian 'atrocities' stories that had been used to galvanise them to action in the early days of the War were found to be either greatly exaggerated or outright lies. Historian Lynette Finch comments that in the 1930s the realisation that they had been collectively conned was one of the reasons that many people in allied nations found it difficult to accept the truth of the Nazis' treatment of the Jews. In Australia too the first news of Japanese treatment of prisoners-of-war was not universally believed.⁴²

When they returned World War I veterans received only parsimonious assistance. Despite the dedicated work of volunteers to assist them they were not - unlike World War II service personnel - the beneficiaries of well-targeted government initiatives. Many struggled for years with poverty and unresolved psychological problems that often impacted severely on their families. As their numbers now rapidly diminish, it is interesting to note that several of these very elderly survivors lived for years in denial of their wartime role and have only in recent times taken any part in commemorative ceremonies. If you listen to their words you will hear about the futility of war but nothing much about 'king or country'.

Pauline Curby

⁴¹ See controversy in local newspapers at this time e.g. *HP*, 22 February 1940, p. 3.

⁴² 'Psychological Propaganda: the War of Ideas on Ideas During the First Half of the Twentieth Century', in *Armed Forces & Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Spring 2000, V. 26 i3, p. 367.



Sydney Mail, 18th August 1915: Soldiers recuperating at Miss Piper's Cronulla Cottage. The cottage was maintained by the local branch of the Red Cross

Holsworthy Airport Proposal, 1996-1997.

There are two topics which are of perennial interest to Sydneysiders. The first is the Sydney property market; the second, perhaps surprisingly, is the site of Sydney's second international airport. This second question has an extensive pedigree having been "on the radar" since the 1940's⁴³ and successive Federal Liberal Governments have long had a desire to build a second airport in the Sutherland Shire⁴⁴. This question of Sydney's second airport had another run in May, this year. Although Badgerys Creek is the "official site" of this airport, apparently the State (Labor) Government has suggested a site near Sutton Forest⁴⁵. But we have known since February 17, 1986, that Badgerys Creek is the preferred site⁴⁶, as it was again stated on the weekend of May 28-29, 2004⁴⁷.

However, this talk of a second Sydney airport has to be seen in a financial context. Recent Federal Governments have adopted an "assets sale" mentality since the Hawke Government privatised (i.e. sold off) Qantas and the Libs sold off the Commonwealth Bank. Airports are as much an asset as banks or telecommunication networks⁴⁸. Kingsford Smith Airport was sold to Southern Airports Corporation on June 25, 2002, for the sum of \$5.588 billion⁴⁹, a somewhat higher price than anticipated⁵⁰. A cynic might say that the "go-slow" on recent airport building had much to do with the anticipated sale of Kingsford Smith Airport. At least the unexpected surplus would certainly have covered the 1996-7 costs of the somewhat abortive selection process.

⁴³ See: P Williams, "Background Paper 20, 1997-1998: Second Sydney Airport - A Chronology" at: www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bp/1997-8/98bp20.htm

⁴⁴ See: A Gietzelt, "A history: fight for the sand hills of Kurnell", *The Leader*, July 13, 2004, p. 7. The process is documented under the generic heading, "Sydney Second Airport", in the Kirkby File in the central branch of the Sutherland Shire Library.

⁴⁵ A Davies, "Found: a new airport option, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 28, 2004, p. 1; "Study gives Sutton site the green light", *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ See: Williams (n. 1).

⁴⁷ A Davies, "Badgerys alive, as PM says no airport needed", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 28-29, 2004, p. 6.

⁴⁸ For a list of recent Liberal asset sales, see: B Frank, "Buy, Bruce, buy now", *The Leader*, July 22, 2004, p. 7.

⁴⁹ For full details on the sale, see: www.finance.gov.au/asset_sales/Website_information_-_Asset_Sale_of_sydney_kingsford_smit.html.

⁵⁰ The sale was expected to raise between \$4.5 and \$5 billion dollars. See: S Lewis, "Airport Sold for \$5.8 Billion", *The Australian*, June 25, 2002, p. 1; D Goodsir, "Flight Curfew in Doubt as Airport Sold", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 26, 2002, p. 1.

It seems this nonsense over the site of the “Second Sydney Airport” will continue into its seventh decade. However, it is now nearly seven years since the Federal Government seemingly put an end to the charade that was the “Holsworthy International Airport” Proposal⁵¹. I have lived in the Engadine-Heathcote district for over thirty years and it is the only issue, I can remember, to have galvanised such a level of community protest.

I want to look at the campaign against “Holsworthy International Airport” as it was called. In fact, this article is to be the first of a series of three on various issues raised by the campaign against the HIA. All three articles result from my opportunity to visit the Holsworthy Military Reserve. During the preparation of the EIS into the Holsworthy site, there were conducted tours of the Reserve and I was able to visit the site on March 11, 1997. The second article will look at features of the military heritage in the Heathcote-Liverpool area outside the boundaries of the Reserve; the third will look at the various heritage values of the Reserve itself.

However, before I begin to look at the HIA campaign, there is one acknowledgement I wish to make. The local community group was “Sutherland Shire Residents against Holsworthy Airport” or SSRAHA. Its convenor was a Heathcote resident, Phil Smith. In some ways, I do not think Phil has received the recognition he deserved. There was a formal Council celebration after the announcement of the rejection of the Holsworthy proposal was announced and Phil Smith was the guest of honour. But he played down his part and instead argued that it was the community involvement which had been responsible for the victory⁵². However, I quote the following by P Kennedy:

The biggest battle of all however, was the anti-Holsworthy airport campaign of 1997. I was proudly part of the group, Sutherland Shire residents Against Holsworthy Airport (SSRAHA), that steered the community effort. My role as media advisor was miniscule compared the group's chairman, Phil Smith of Eltham Place, Heathcote. Phil led a very committed group of Sutherland Shire residents to win one of the Shire's most important environmental battles...

⁵¹ The proposal was officially abandoned on September 3, 1997. See: D Luffe, “Badgerys Creek our new 24-hour airport”, *The Daily Telegraph*, September 4, 1997, p. 16. For the local view: “We’ve won”, *The Leader*, September 4, 1997, p. 3.; “We have won the battle”, *Engadine District News*, September 9, 1997, p. 1.

⁵² In particular, he wanted to emphasise the role played by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (P Kennedy, *From Bottle Forest to Heathcote*, Kennedy Communications, 1999, p. 133). On the Environment Centre, see: L Bursill, “The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre”, *SSHS Bulletin*, 7(2), May, 2004, pp. 27-29.

While there were other groups around Sydney fighting the proposal, I can proudly say it was Sutherland Shire Residents Against Holsworthy Airport that had the highest public profile. Even more proudly I can say it was a Heathcote lad, Phil Smith, who led the group to victory...⁵³

The current stage of the Second Sydney Airport saga began on February 17, 1986, when the Federal (Labor) Government announced that after a lengthy consideration of a number of sites, which included Holsworthy, Badgerys Creek had been chosen as the site of Sydney's second airport. Unfortunately, not much seemed to happen out at Badgerys Creek.

The lack of activity was not entirely the fault of the Labor Government as Williams' paper makes clear (see n. 1). The opening of a third runway at KSA (November 4, 1994) also delayed the need for a second airport at Badgerys Creek. More recently (i.e. prior to 1996), some of the blame rests with the Liberal Opposition who used their senate majority to reject funding bills for Badgerys Creek. The impasse continued until 1996. On January 28, 1996, the Liberal Opposition, now led by John Howard, released its policy on Sydney airports with a commitment to build as Sydney's second airport the Sydney West Airport! The election was held on March 2, 1996, and the coalition won. On March 27, the Federal Minister for Transport, a Country Party member based in Goulburn, John Sharp, announced that the EIS for Badgerys Creek would now also include the Holsworthy site, rejected in 1986.

The inclusion of Holsworthy on this new short list came as a surprise to local residents. There had been no mention of it during the election and the Government certainly had no election mandate to build an airport at Holsworthy⁵⁴. The following table indicates the timetable of Holsworthy's choice⁵⁵.

1979: Fraser Government chooses Badgerys Creek as the preferred second airport site and rejects **Holsworthy**.

1986: Hawke Government selects Badgerys as best from 10 and ranks **Holsworthy** as second worst.

1993: Department of Defence sells off some **Holsworthy** land as residential blocks, creating the suburb of Wattle Grove.

⁵³ Kennedy, op. cit., p. 133.

⁵⁴ R Tickner, "No mandate for an airport at Holsworthy", *The Leader*, March 20, 1997, p. 12.

⁵⁵ The table was printed in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 7, 1997, p. 4.

1994: Private Consortium briefs then Opposition Leader, John Howard, in October on ambitious plan for airport at **Holsworthy**, with Badgerys to become a housing estate⁵⁶ .

1995: Howard surprises anti-aircraft noise campaigners at his electoral office in July by floating **Holsworthy** as an airport option.

1996: No mention of **Holsworthy** by the Coalition before the March election victory, but Sydney stunned by Transport Minister John Sharp's announcement in May that it will be the only fallback site if Badgerys unsuitable.

Part of the reason why Sydney was so stunned is indicated by the photo below.



A sign such as this used to stand at a gateway, opposite the junction of New Illawarra and Heathcote Roads. The gate has disappeared and an vegetated embankment now covers the site. For more than a century, the Holsworthy Military Reserve had been a firing range and the area was littered with unexploded munitions. However, this was not considered a hindrance⁵⁷ . There was a simple solution; the site was to be cleared of **by fire**. This rather surprising piece of information I picked up from my guide, WO Richard Chaney. the day I toured the Range.

The clearance was not to be done by the Royal Australian Army Engineers, as you might have expected, but by private contractors. WO Chaney did not say so,

⁵⁶ For details, see: M Hogarth, "How airport plan took off", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 11, 1997, pp. 1, 6.

⁵⁷ D Luff, "Live bombs won't stop new airport", *The Daily Telegraph*, April 28, 1997, p. 10.

but I got the impression that the army thought it was too dangerous. He did admit that the army never went into the gullies on the Range but confined themselves to the ridge tops even when fighting bushfires on the Range. The clearance fire had to generate sufficient heat that it caused all the unexploded munitions to explode. In other words, a day of extreme fire danger would have to be chosen. What if the fire escaped from the Reserve? For those of us who can remember the Christmas bushfires of 1994 and 2001, this would have been a frightening prospect.

Community protest began immediately, once the shock of John Sharp's announcement had passed. Each of the areas involved generated its own protest groups. This account is based on my perspective as a resident of Sutherland Shire. There were two main groups. Although CRASH (Councils and Residents against the Selection of Holsworthy) represented all effected areas, the chairwoman was Sutherland Shire Councillor, Lorraine Rodden. CRASH was an umbrella group and was more "official" than other groups. Murray Hogarth (see n. 14) described it as the key anti-Holsworthy group, though its negotiations had no impact on the Howard Liberal Government⁵⁸.

Its most visible achievement was the production of the short video, "Plane Stupid"⁵⁹. This video enabled its viewers to tour the Reserve from their own living rooms, and only served to emphasise the apparent stupidity of the choice of Holsworthy. Like Patrick Kenedy, I, too, was a member of SSRAHA, but an even more minor member than he. I delivered a few pamphlets, wrote many letters to local and federal politicians and had a number of anti-airport articles and letters published in the local press. For me, like Patrick, it was SSRAHA which championed the fight against the airport. Again, somewhat like CRASH, SSRAHA was a co-ordinating group. Some idea of its many activities can be gleaned from its newsletter, "Plane Truth". There were five editions⁶⁰.

Two meetings come to mind. The first was a public meeting in the hall of St John Bosco High School on April 30, 1997, organised by the state Labor member for Bulli, Ian Mcmanus.. It was well attended but not by Dana Vale, the fiercely anti-Holsworthy Airport Liberal member for the seat of Hughes⁶¹. The principal speaker was Robert Tickner, the former Labor member for Hughes, who had lost his seat in the recent election. He was able to explain the parliamentary process

⁵⁸ C Ryan, "Coalition leaders ignore protesters", *The Leader*, April 3, 1997, p. 28.

⁵⁹ Copies of the video can still be borrowed from Sutherland Library.

⁶⁰ You should be able to find a copy of all five filed under, "Holsworthy Airport Proposal", in the vertical file in the Local Studies Collection at Sutherland Library.

⁶¹ I will have more to say on Dana Vale later.

which would result in the airport decision - it would be a cabinet decision⁶² . There would not be any need for a parliamentary vote! The meeting demonstrated the depth of community feeling and its resolve that the airport proposal should be defeated⁶³ .

The second was, in fact, the finale of the public protest. It was held at Holsworthy Park, Holsworthy, on Sunday, July 27, 1997. A crowd, generally estimated at fifteen thousand, by both the city⁶⁴ and local media⁶⁵ , turned up to hear speaker after speaker denounce the Holsworthy Airport Proposal. The rally was an outstanding success⁶⁶ and much of the media impact was gained by an aerial photos showing the huge crowd forming the word, "NO"⁶⁷ . In fact, this one image has become the standard visual image of the entire campaign⁶⁸ . The rally even attracted overseas attention⁶⁹ . While the public campaign did not slacken, the main focus became waiting for the publication of the Environmental Impact Statement⁷⁰ .

In the Sydney context, an airport is as much a political task as an engineering one. On one political level, nothing has changed. We still have a State Labor Government, led by Bob Carr, and a Federal Liberal Government, led by John Howard. At the time of writing (July, 2004) if an election were to be held, both governments would probably lose but not because of their airport stance. And political point scoring is still the main game. So, in the article published in May this year (n. 5, above), the Federal Liberal Government warns the State Labor

⁶² "Engadine Residents demonstrate their concerns over Holsworthy", *Engadine District News*, May 6, 1997, p. 2.

⁶³ *Engadine District News*, May 6, 1997, pp. 1-2; C Ryan, "Airport rally draws 1500", *The Leader*, May 6, 1997, p. 2.

⁶⁴ M Hogarth, "PM warned of mass protests as 15,000 join to fight airport", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 28, 1997, p. 3; P Trute, "15,000 people say 'NO' to Holsworthy Airport", *The Daily Telegraph*, July 28, 1997.

⁶⁵ "Now Hear This", *The Leader*, July, 20, 1997, p.1; G Morrison, "Oh! Johnnie, Oh! Johnnie", *The Shire Sentinel*, August 6, 1997, pp.1-2.

⁶⁶ P Smith, "Rally an outstanding success", *The Leader*, July 31, 1997, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Cf. Trute (n. 20) and *The Leader*, July 27, 1997, p. 1.

⁶⁸ See: Bursill (n. 9), p. 29; Kennedy (n. 9), p. 132.

⁶⁹ "Anti-Holsworthy Rally gains international attention" *Engadine Dist. News*, August 24, 1997, p. 9.

⁷⁰ You can find a copy of the draft environmental impact statement filed under "Holsworthy Airport Proposal" in the vertical file in the Local Studies Collection, Sutherland Library. The front cover, interestingly, carries a sticker announcing the elimination of the Holsworthy site!

Government not to develop land close to the airport site at Badgerys forgetting that it had done the same in 1996⁷¹ .

The Federal Minister for Transport in 1996, John Sharp, is long gone. Again not because of the airport, but because of a misunderstanding over an accommodation allowance. However, at the level of the minor players, things are more interesting. There were four state parliament seats involved - Bulli, Cronulla, Miranda. and Sutherland. Of the four members in 1996-7, only one is still in parliament - Malcolm Kerr (Lib), the member for Cronulla. Of the other three, Ian McManus (Bulli - Lab), Ron Phillips (Miranda - Lib), Chris Downey (Sutherland - Lib), only Downey could be claimed as a victim of the airport proposal. Initially, he had backed the anti-airport campaign⁷² , but later saw it as a Labor stunt⁷³ .

There were two federal seats involved: Cook (Stephen Mutch - Lib) and Hughes (Dana Vale - Lib). Mutch was the only local candidate who unswervingly backed the airport⁷⁴ . However, his constituents already had had their fill of airport noise , i.e. noise from KSA not Holsworthy⁷⁵ . After one term in parliament, Mutch lost preselection in a very messy squabble to the former NSW “Mr Olympics”, Bruce Baird⁷⁶ .

Of all the parliamentarians, the undoubted winner is Dana Vale, currently Minister for Veteran Affairs. Dana was an early opponent of the airport proposal⁷⁷ and talked tough⁷⁸ - even threatening to cross the floor to vote against the airport. However, since as Robert Tickner made clear (n. 19, above) there would be no parliamentary vote, this was a threat she never had to carry out⁷⁹ . Dana failed to attend the April 30, 1997, protest rally at St John Bosco College. Although she had a prior engagement, she tried to make political mileage out of non-attendance by claiming that the Labor organisers had deliberately not invited her.

⁷¹ M Hogarth, “Confusion reigns after Badgerys land sold off”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 12, 1996, p. 7.

⁷² C Downey, “Downey blasts Howard’s way”, *The Leader*, November 14, 1996, p. 7.

⁷³ “Airport lobbyists pawn in Labor game - Downey”, *The Leader*, May 20, 1997, p. 10.

⁷⁴ G Morrison, “Ask a simple Question”, *The Shire Sentinel*, July 23, 1997, p. 2.

⁷⁵ “Plea to keep up the pressure on Mutch”, *The Leader*, August 14, 1997, p. 9.

⁷⁶ I have more to say on Baird later. His career provides a nice case study in the politics of airports.

⁷⁷ “MP vows to fight”, *The Leader*, February 13, 1997, P. 16.

⁷⁸ “Vale seeks airport rethink”, *The Leader*, May 13, 1997, p. 21; “Vale urges Govt to examine second airport options”, *The Leader*, April 1, 1997, p. 7.

⁷⁹ Cf. A Williams, “Strong rhetoric, weak on action”, *The Leader*, August 7, 1997, p. 12.

McManus was able to provide her “inability to attend” to the media⁸⁰. However, she made sure she attended the Holsworthy Park Rally. She was not on the list of speakers; no “local” members were. However, with the help of Lorraine Rodden, of CRASH, Dana Vale was able to usurp the microphone and deliver a tirade not against the government of John Howard but against the Labor Party for conspiring against her - a common theme of hers during the campaign. It was a most unedifying site⁸¹.

However, there was one edifying result from the anti-airport campaign. For years, Holsworthy Military Reserve was where the army played with its really big guns. Yet, that the army played there with its really big guns meant that the area had been cut off from the developmental pressures that had afflicted other natural areas of Sydney⁸². Everyone suddenly discovered that the Holsworthy Military Reserve had heritage value.

1997: Australian Heritage Commission moves to protect **Holsworthy**, throwing the focus back onto Badgerys or do-nothing option of entrenching Kingsford Smith⁸³.

The area is rich in Aboriginal art⁸⁴ and has significant natural heritage value, including an important koala population⁸⁵. Then, there is its historic heritage value, including the remains of the village of Eckersley⁸⁶. The Holsworthy Military Reserve, also, has strong links with World War 1. It was the site of the Remount Depot⁸⁷ where Light Horse units trained before being sent overseas and also the site of an internment camp for German residents and other enemy

⁸⁰ “Lib MP deceives her electorate”, *The Daily Telegraph*, May 17, 1997, p. 19; M Trembath, “McManus accuses Vale in protest rift”, *The Leader*, May 20, 1997, p. 5.

⁸¹ K McDonnell, “Outburst a distraction”, *The Leader*, August 7, 1997, p. 12.

⁸² A recent article on a water catchment area to the south of Sydney illustrates the value of these closed off areas: S Benson, “Sydney’s secret garden”, *The Daily Telegraph*, April 3, 2004, p. 19. Further on water catchment areas and natural heritage, see: J Colcott, “Watch those Catchment Areas,” *National Trust (NSW) Quarterly*, 80, June, 1996, pp. 30-31.

⁸³ This is the last item in the table from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 7, 1997, p. 4 (see n. 11).

⁸⁴ See: M Hogarth, “Aboriginal groups vow to wage relentless battle”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 7, 1997, p. 4.

⁸⁵ “Significant koala population under threat by proposed Holsworthy airport”, *Shire Sentinel*, May 28, 1997, p. 5; M Hogarth, “Battle against second airport takes to the trees”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 25, 1997, p. 14.

⁸⁶ F Purvis, “Eckersley - the Town that was To be”, *SSHS Bulletin*, 3(3), August, 2000, pp. 1, 11-12.

⁸⁷ C Ludlow, *History and Significance of the Remount Depot, Holsworthy*, Report to the Defence Housing Authority, 1993.

aliens⁸⁸. This heritage value was recognised by the Australian Heritage Commission when it placed Holsworthy Military Reserve on the Register of the National Estate on July 25, 1997⁸⁹, with the name, Cubbitch Batra National Estate Area⁹⁰.

On September 3, 1997, the Federal Government announced the rejection of the Holsworthy site (see n. 8). Environmental concerns had supposedly won the day. But had they? In 2000, the Howard Liberal Government floated another proposal to build an airport in the Sutherland Shire. The site was to be the Kurnell Peninsula and the proposal was raised by Howard, himself. What had happened to Badgerys Creek? It had been put on a very slow backburner; for, an airport at Badgerys Creek, Howard thought, would cost the seat of the Minister for Sport, Jacqui Kelly⁹¹.

This proposal had some interest for Bruce Baird, now Liberal member for Cook (he had replaced the hapless Stephen Mutch). Back in 1996-1997, Baird was out of parliament and headed the Tourism Council of Australia. The Tourism Council not only supported an airport at Holsworthy but argued that it be completely deregulated.⁹² Imagines planes taking off twenty four hour a day every day. At the time Bruce Baird was looking for somewhere to live and I invited him to move to Holsworthy to show his support for the Holsworthy airport⁹³ - strangely, he did not. What was his attitude now to Kurnell Airport? Of course, he strongly opposed, arguing that it might cost the Liberal Party the seat of Cook in the next Federal election⁹⁴. So much for his commitment to an airport. Howard let the

⁸⁸ On Holsworthy's heritage value, see: G Quint, *Holsworthy Landscape Conservation Area*, National Trust of NSW, 1996; "Holsworthy - National Heritage Threatened", *National Trust Quarterly*, n.81, October, 1996, pp. 4-5; J Shepper, "Holsworthy - Airport or National Park", *National Parks Journal*, October, 1996, pp. 14-16; *Holsworthy Military Reserve*, National Parks Association (Macarthur Branch), n.d. (but published in 1997).

⁸⁹ M Hogarth, "Heritage move a challenge to airport plans", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 26, 1997, p. 3.

⁹⁰ "Heritage Listed but Fight goes on", *The Leader*, July 29, 1997, p. 2.

⁹¹ M Gratton, "Cabinet explores option for runway at Kurnell Peninsula", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 11, 2000, p. 2.

⁹² D Passay, "Holsworthy gets backing of peak tourism body", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 9, 1997, p. 6.

⁹³ G Duncan, "An Open Letter to Bruce Baird", *The Shire Sentinel*, May 14, 1997, p.4; "A Final Open Letter to Bruce Baird", *The Shire Sentinel*, July 23, 1997, p.4.

⁹⁴ S Lewis, "Cabinet on track for transport deal", *The Financial Review*, December 12, 2000, p. 3.

matter drop⁹⁵ and Kingsford Smith Airport was sold off two years later for a windfall profit (see n. 9, above).

What to make of the Holsworthy Airport proposal seven years on? We now have the advantage of hindsight. Badgerys Creek has not been built, is not being built and Kingsford Smith Airport has been sold. Was it just a political stunt? Whatever the answer, it must be said that the Holsworthy Proposal allowed a new and fairly unknown local member, Dana Vale, victorious in an election which within the seat had some racist overtones⁹⁶, to appear as the champion of local interests and consolidate her position as the Liberal member for Hughes, so far very successfully⁹⁷.

Given that Federal Liberal Governments have long had an obsession with building an airport in the Sutherland Shire (see n. 2, above), have we seen the end of this obsession? Not until Sydney's second airport is built **somewhere else**.

Garriock Duncan



Above photo courtesy of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.

⁹⁵ M Gratton, “New Airport? No, the one we have will have to work harder”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 12, 2000, p. 6.

⁹⁶ Robert Tickner had been Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, always a poisoned parliamentary chalice, and had come under strong criticism from the right for his alleged part in the “Hindmarsh Island Bridge Secret Women’s Business” episode.

⁹⁷ The Kurnell Airport Proposal of 2000 gave the same opportunity to Bruce Baird. In his case, it allowed him to consolidate the local Liberal Party, fractious after the Mutch affair.

The Journey Begins – Plymouth Steps

In my book— KURNELL – BIRTHPLACE OF MODERN AUSTRALIA, and at the its launch on the 230th anniversary of Cook's landing at Kurnell [in the company of the Shire Mayor, Councillors, State and Federal MPs, historians, writers, environmentalists and members of the community] I mentioned that on my visit to Plymouth in England as I stood on those ancient and historic Plymouth Steps I recalled that it was from this very spot in 1588, Sir Francis Drake [after a game of bowls] launched the English fleet and defeated the Spanish Armada.



It was from here that the Pilgrim Fathers on board the *Mayflower* sailed in 1620, and landed at what they called Plymouth Rock, the foundation stone of America. Their landing place is held sacred!

And as I recalled that in 1768, James Cook, on board the *Endeavour* also set out from those same Plymouth Steps, discovered Australia landing first at Kurnell, and much of the First Fleet was prepared, crewed and loaded at Plymouth — I was disappointed to see only the British and American flags flying — There is **no** Australian flag! This is not only a shame, but to me it is a lack of recognition of Australia and possibly even bit of a snub to Australia.

At the book launch I pointed out my disappointment at it's omission — My quest to have an Australian flag flying at Plymouth Steps has since been taken up by Bob Walshe OAM in his position of Chairman of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, MPs Danna Vale and Bruce Baird, Prime Minister John Howard and the British Ambassador to Australia, Australian High Commissioner in Britain and other heads of state in England – but it all comes down to Plymouth City Council's lack of enthusiasm. Plymouth Council, agree with our PM , MPs and other British and Australian dignitaries, and has admitted and conceded that we do have an important historical link with Plymouth Steps and that we can have our Australian National Flag flying on one or two special occasions a year, but it must be in place

of the American flag which would have to be taken down for the occasion as they only have two flag poles in situ and it is not feasible to fly more than one flag there daily.

Are we still thought of as the colonies? It would appear so from the response by the Plymouth City Council. I do feel that Australia should be acknowledged at this historically significant starting point of modern Australian settlement which really is part of our heritage. Australian and British Administration also acknowledge this but Plymouth City Council is unenthusiastic, indifferent and apparently loathe to formally recognising Australia by erecting a third flag pole at the site, it is not as though there is insufficient space to do so.

This issue has been thrown to and from Canberra, England and the Shire since 29th April 2000. The most recent correspondence re this important Australian recognition was dated 9th September 2003 from the Prime Minister's office in which he stated that Plymouth City Council regrets that it is unable to agree to the flying of the Australian National Flag on a permanent basis [like the American flag], however the Council would be prepared to consider flying the Australian National Flag on a particular day or anniversary which has significance for both Australia and the Plymouth Steps. No doubt America would jump up and down should we lower their permanent flag there and run ours up in its stead even on a temporary basis, the American Ambassador said as much when I spoke to him and the British Ambassador about it in May of this year, though he does agree that the Australian flag should also fly at Plymouth Steps.

Daphne Salt

MEMORIES of MATES from SYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOL 1930s - by Jim Baker

In the 1930s I lived at Blakehurst and walked across the Georges River Bridge each day to attend the Sylvania Public School. Sylvania is still the gateway to the Sutherland Shire but many of the places where I played at weekends with my school mates have changed beyond recognition. Here are a few anecdotes of our lifestyle in those days.....

Canberra Oval – bordered by Canberra Rd. and Evelyn St. – was a sports field in those days but surrounded by bushland vacant lots with just a few houses here and there. **The Dunn family** owned a brick & tile house of the Federation period with a sandstone block front fence on the corner of Canberra Rd. and Pembroke St. I attended Sylvania Public School in the 1930s with Garnet and Norma Dunn. Tricia Thornton, who now lives in the Dunn family home, kindly provided me with the information that she is a first cousin to my old school mates and that the house is heritage listed.

One day Garnet Dunn joined with me and some other 9 and 10 year-old boys at the field for a game of cricket and to plan the day's activities. We noticed that a certain fellow made a habit of coming there to down 2 or 3 bottles of wine and then to lie on the grass

enjoying his drunken slumber. His favourite haunt was beside a brick shelter shed (no longer there) in the shade of a gum tree. We were like so many other energetic and adventurous boys who acted before thinking and decided to tease and provoke this fellow into giving us a chase. To our dismay we discovered that although he seemed unlikely to even get up a trot, he could in fact run like a deer!

We thought we'd run for Dunn's stone fence, about 150 metres away, and take refuge behind it. Although we ran flat out, by the time we were half way there he was gaining on us and it became obvious one of us would be caught. Gerry Parkinson was a small, dumpy boy not cut out for speed. In his panic he clutched at me, grabbing me by the collar and slowing me down. Our pursuer gained on me while Gerry, thinking of self preservation at all costs, kept going.

I really thought my last days had come. "We're sorry, mister" I blurted out, "We really didn't mean it. We were just after a chase". To my great relief the fellow's face seemed to soften and he simply let me go. We all raced away to the comfort and safety of our homes. Every time I pass Dunn's front fence I recall the terror of the chase and how as young school boys we had to learn that it was wrong to taunt someone less fortunate than ourselves.

*Gerry Parkinson lived in **Bellingara Rd.** on a large block of land where his parents ran a **chook and duck farm**. This land (opposite the Frank Vickery Village) has probably now become the grounds of Sylvania High School. One school mate, **John Clark**, lived close by on the western side of Port Hacking Road, and others, **Andy and Selwyn Hancock**, lived on the eastern side where their father ran a successful **orchid nursery** for a number of years.*

***Emil Watts**, another of the boys who were part of the great chase on Canberra oval, lived opposite in Melrose Avenue, with his sisters Peggy and Vera who also attended Sylvania Public School. Sadly Emil lost his life during the Solomon Islands campaign in World War II.*

***Bobby Smith**, and his sisters, Biddy and Dorothy, lived near the end of Belgrave Esplanade, on a small peninsula that projected into **Gwawley Bay**. The development of **Sylvania Waters** around this bay is a far cry from what it looked like in the days of **Smith's oyster business** in that area.*

***Mervyn Houghton** lived in a bush cottage with his brothers, Henry and George, and their father who was their sole parent. My memory, fickle though it is, would place this cottage near the corner of **Formosa and Melrose Avenue**. Mr. Houghton was a firewood merchant who used gelignite to blow down dead trees. Occasionally Mervyn would pinch some of the gelignite sticks, complete with detonators, fuse cable and matches, to use at the local illegal rubbish tip in the bush to see how high we could blow the large tins and drums (some of these could still be circling earth in outer space!). Eventually Mervyn's father caught him at it so that was the end of our rubbish tip antics.*

*Jim Samways was Sylvania School's **most talented pupil** in those days. His parents ran a **dairy farm** close to today's intersection of Melrose Ave. and Lisbon St. **Ken and Ailsa Anderson** were pupils in the early to mid 1930s and lived in **Tara St.** Ken was a real dare-devil and some of his inspired activities were dangerous, including climbing trees, quarry faces, and bridges.*

*The Sylvania boys looked up to **Jack Willard** who had acquired advanced knowledge in many subjects, and had a different way of looking at life. He lived with his parents and his sister, Betty, in one of the **Maritime cottages** on the Georges River foreshore, in Belgrave Esplanade, close to the bridge and Princes Highway. They became lifelong friends whom I valued dearly. **Ron and Ray Halliday**, who attended Sylvania Public School, lived in the Maritime cottage next door to the Willards. Further along on a bend in Belgrave Esplanade, lived **Betty Quinn**, who was a very pretty girl and admired by all the school boys.*

*My memories of those carefree school days include sampling the fruit from Carter's huge greengage plum tree. **Carter's chook yard, on the corner of Port Hacking Rd. and Melrose Avenue, was where Sylvania Shopping Centre now stands.** A small creek close by has now been covered over. The pipes under Port Hacking Road are still there on the eastern side. We often souvenired a plentiful supply of Carter's plums and then made our way into those large pipes to enjoy our delicious feast. This was much more enjoyable than being chased by an enraged and drunken pursuer on Canberra oval!*

Jim Baker, July, 2004

Press Release

SUTHERLAND SHIRE IDENTITY FEATURES IN HISTORICAL BOOK



Valentina as a child in Russia

A biography of a prominent Shire identity, Mrs. Valentina Craig who helped found Australia's orchid cut flowers export industry from a nursery in First Ave. Loftus, has recently been compiled.

Former Sutherland Shire Council media officer, Jon Woodworth said Mrs. Craig's story covered her childhood in Russia during the traumatic years of the communist Revolution and her subsequent life as a migrant living in Sydney.

"It is the story, common to many migrant families, struggling to make ends meet during the Great Depression, struggling to fit into our society as New Australians, and struggling to come to grips with the atrocities which were inflicted on family members

back in their homeland.

“It wasn’t until Mrs. Craig moved to Lotus and lived in a fibro cottage with a quarter acre allotment, back fences and BBQ’s, school committees and hospital fundraising groups that Valentina felt she really started to assimilate into Australian culture.

“The story has many humorous accounts, like the time her father made a large batch of Viennese ice cream to sell at Audley, in the Royal National Park. “He didn’t know how to spell ice cream (he only had a dated, secondhand dictionary) and because the Russian language is phonetic, spelt the words “*Ise Kreem for sale*” on the side of his truck. “He wondered why people were not queuing up to buy his delicious product on a scorching day,” Mr. Woodworth said.

The title of the book, Little Russian Princess, comes from the nickname which students used to taunt her at school. Mrs. Craig was dux of her school but in the 1930’s was refused entry to university law. The dean told her “because as a migrant women, clients would not trust you so it’s no use studying”

She was drawn towards the arts world and at the tender age of 18 was drawn into the inner circle of the renowned photographer Max Dupain who photographed her and invited her to regular Friday evening soirées.

Her first husband Jim was killed in the battle of Britain, and it wasn’t until the young widow met her second husband Tal that she moved to the Shire.

She was a very active member of the community committee which raised funding and marched on NSW Parliament to get the Sutherland Hospital built. She also helped establish local schools and after fighting a bushfire, which threatened her home, organized local residents into a volunteer group which started Loftus Bush Fire Brigade.

The book is written as a first hand antidotal account of life in Sydney from the 1920’s to the present, and deals with multiculturalism and women’s rights issues. The final chapters deal with the ethics and emotions of euthanasia - her elderly father chose to die following a severe stroke.

Mr. Woodworth has provided the Historical Society with a copy of the manuscript and is currently seeking a sponsor, or publisher, to have the book printed in time for Sutherland’s Centenary in 2006.

For further information please contact the author
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